innovationseven

INNOVATION FOR SEVEN GENERATIONS

FCC National Reconciliation Pathway

Received by :

Federation of Canadian Chiropractic

April 2026

Table of Contents

Table of Contents i

Acknowledgements 1

Introduction 2

Methods Informing the Reconciliation Pathway 2

Background 3

Historical Context and Systemic Barriers 3

Indigenous' Experiences with the Health Care System, Health Professions and the Chiropractic Profession 4

About Federation of Canadian Chiropractic 7

The Federation of Canadian Chiropractors Commitment to Reconciliation 8

The FCC Reconciliation Pathway 9

Pathway Vision 9

Guiding Principles 9

Objectives/Goals 10

Alignment with Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing 10

Core Elements of Reconciliation 10

Indigenous Cultural Safety and Competency 11

Develop and Implement a Centre for Wise Practices 11

Encourage and Promote Indigenous People in the Profession and Leadership Positions 12

Communications and Outreach 13

Supporting Partners in Addressing Broader Barriers to Chiropractic Care 14

Accountability and Transparency 14

Appendix 15

FCC Reconciliation Pathway – Draft for Discussion

Acknowledgements

As the President of the Federation of Canadian Chiropractic, I am pleased to accept this report.

The FCC, through the work of the Regulatory Council led by Dr. Darrell Wade, has engaged in a wide-ranging consultative process with Innovation 7 to gather the information contained in this report. We acknowledge the importance of these reconciliation efforts to our members, our Indigenous partners, the Chiropractic profession and the Canadian public.

Reconciliation, in the context of Canada and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), refers to the process of establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. It involves acknowledging the past, addressing the ongoing legacy of colonialism, and working towards a more equitable and inclusive society.

True reconciliation within the profession cannot be addressed by one part of the profession. Rather, all partners must navigate this work together and in the public interest to address entrenched systemic structural, jurisdictional, and political barriers. The path forward requires embedding cultural safety into education, accreditation and regulation and creating opportunities for Indigenous people to enter the profession and for their voices to be heard at the advisory level.

Implementation of the Reconciliation Pathway will require careful consideration of roles and boundaries, as well as balancing the urgency to move forward while ensuring sustainability of efforts. FCC is committed to supporting these efforts and working with its partners to implement this Reconciliation Pathway.

Dr. Todd Halowski, D.C.
President, Federation of Canadian Chiropractic

Introduction

This Reconciliation Pathway represents the culmination of over three years of reflection, research and engagement with Indigenous leaders, Indigenous chiropractors, chiropractors who serve Indigenous patients across Canada and Indigenous patients of chiropractors.

We recognize and acknowledge the history and intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples as a result of colonization – particularly as it relates to health professionals and health services received by Indigenous peoples.

Our commitment is to work to ensure that chiropractors in Canada are trained to provide culturally informed and safe care to Indigenous patients. Ultimately, we are committed to ensuring Indigenous patients feel safe and receive culturally relevant care from chiropractors no matter where they are located in Canada.

Methods Informing the Reconciliation Pathway

This Reconciliation Pathway was developed over a number of years of reflection, discussion and research. Since 2023, the FCC has invested in research and dialogue including establishing an Indigenous Cultural Safety Working Group (ICSWG) to support the development of an FCC National Reconciliation Pathway. In September 2024, the FCC began working with Innovation 7[1] to undertake engagement and provide guidance in developing an FCC shared pathway towards reconciliation. As part of the Pathway development process, Innovation 7:

- Conducted research on reconciliation in the health professional and health care space;
- Engaged with a selection of thought leaders and perspective holders including:
    - A selection of FCC leadership.
    - A selection of chiropractors who provide health services to Indigenous patients. These individuals were identified through outreach to chiropractors to participate in the engagement process.
    - A number of Indigenous chiropractors who volunteered following recruitment engagement notices by provincial and territorial regulatory bodies.
    - Members of the FCC ICSWG.

[1] www.innovation7.ca

    - Indigenous patients who volunteered to participate in engagements and share their perspectives and experiences.
    - Discussion with representatives of Health Departments in a selected number of First Nation communities across Canada.
- Additional research and engagement with leaders in similar professional associations who had developed a reconciliation plan.

This research and engagement informed reconciliation progress to date, challenges, priorities for the Pathway, and expected outcomes.

It is recognized that the engagement process did not reach representatives of Métis and Inuit populations. This is attributed to the geographical dispersion of these populations. As the FCC proceeds with the implementation of the Reconciliation Pathway, it will seek to engage leaders, Elders and community members from Métis and Inuit populations and communities.

Background

Indigenous peoples in Canada have experienced significant disparities and challenges in accessing and receiving quality health care in Canada. These experiences are shaped by historical, social, and systemic factors, including colonization, forced assimilation, and ongoing marginalization. It is widely recognized that Indigenous Peoples in Canada continue to experience health disparities due to the legacy of colonization and marginalization in the health care system.

Historical Context and Systemic Barriers

Historically, Indigenous peoples faced displacement, forced relocations, and the suppression of cultural practices, which contributed to mistrust of government. In addition, medical professionals often supported government policies that led to maltreatment, lack of treatment and often separation of children from family at the recommendations of health professionals.[2] Colonial policies such as residential schools aimed to assimilate Indigenous children, severely impacted community structures and health outcomes[3].

[2] Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). (2019). *Indigenous Peoples' Health Care in Canada*. https://www.cihi.ca/en/indigenous-peoples-health-care-in-canada

[3] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honoring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*. Final Report of the TRC of Canada. http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Final_Report_English1.pdf

These policies and practices have created inter-generational trauma and a deep mistrust in the Canadian health care system and professionals.

Indigenous' Experiences with the Health Care System, Health Professions and the Chiropractic Profession

Today, Indigenous populations experience higher rates of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, and tuberculosis compared to non-Indigenous Canadians (CIHI, 2019). They also face barriers to appropriate health care and supports due to geographic isolation, limited healthcare infrastructure, and inadequate culturally safe services.

Many Indigenous individuals report experiencing discrimination, cultural insensitivity, and lack of trust in health care providers[4]. This has contributed to lower levels of engagement with health services and poorer health outcomes. For Indigenous peoples in Canada, equitable access to culturally safe and supportive health care is a priority.

> *Outside of my chiropractor, I have experienced lots of trauma within the health system. I won't go to the local hospital – I worry that I am seen as high risk because I am Indigenous and I worry about what they have in my file.*
> Indigenous Patients

Efforts to improve Indigenous health experiences include the development of culturally appropriate care models, incorporation of traditional healing practices, and increased Indigenous representation among health professionals.

What We Heard in Developing the Reconciliation Pathway

Chiropractor Reflections on Cultural Awareness and Safety Training

Consultations with approximately 15 chiropractors who were Indigenous and/or provided chiropractic services to Indigenous patients, revealed that there were limited cultural safety training opportunities as it relates to Indigenous peoples in Canada. This includes thorough formal training and ongoing professional development. While some improvement were observed, particularly among more recent graduates from chiropractic training, the training provided was primarily through an equity, diversity and inclusion lens as opposed to an Indigenous

> *Nothing in the curriculum that recognized Indigenous ways of knowing and hands on healing.*
> Indigenous Chiropractor

[4] Anderson, I., Baum, F., & Bentley, M. (2017). *Beyond Bandaids: Exploring the Underlying Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health*. In L. T. Brown & T. C. B. L. Green (Eds.), *Indigenous Health in Canada: Historical, Cultural, and Social Perspectives* (pp. 45–68). Canadian Scholars' Press.

lens — which is viewed as distinct from other groups. While some noted programming offered by associations like the Canadian Chiropractic Association—progress was seen as uneven.

Several chiropractors noted that although resources now exist, they were not available during their training, and much of their current understanding stems from personal values of empathy, compassion, and respect for traditional healing. Several chiropractors described developing cultural awareness and humility through personal experiences working with Indigenous patients or living in close proximity to Indigenous communities. A few shared stories of developing trust and rapport through personal research, outreach, community engagement, or support from local First Nation Councils.

There is support for courses in Indigenous culturally safe care as part of the Canadian chiropractic education and licensure process, as well as continuing education requirements. The latter was seen as particularly important for those chiropractors who graduated before cultural safety in health care became a priority and for those educated outside Canada.

> *The FCC needs to continue to work with institutions to effect change. A lot of chiropractors are foreign trained. How to ensure all chiropractors in Canada have appropriate training regardless of where they are trained? There has to be a pre-requisite module on Indigenous cultural safety that has to be completed to write chiropractic exams or receiving their license.*
>
> Indigenous Chiropractor

In addition, there is desire for centralized tools and supports to chiropractors in the provision of culturally safe practices.

Patient Reflections

> *In some of my past experiences, the chiropractor could have done more to understand and support my beliefs and culture.*
>
> Indigenous Patient

Patients interviewed generally indicated having positive experiences with their chiropractor, with some indicating having fewer positive experiences. In these instances, patients sought out a new chiropractor. Most felt comfortable discussing cultural beliefs with their current chiropractors. Key factors in building trust and comfort were open-mindedness, respect, and a sense of safety. Personal connections were identified as being very important.

There is agreement among those engaged that the chiropractic profession most closely aligns with First Nations concepts of health and healing of the whole individual naturally as opposed to medical interventions or prescription medication.

> *I feel safer with my chiropractor than I do with other medical professionals.*
> Indigenous Patients

Most of the patients interviewed were unaware of how to make a complaint about the care that they have received.

Broader Barriers

Both the chiropractors and patients identified systemic barriers that continue to limit both training and care access. These included a lack of Indigenous worldviews in chiropractic educational content (e.g., the undervaluing of Indigenous healing practices in chiropractic clinical education and recognizing hands-on, traditional approaches), economic challenges faced by patients (e.g., lack of funding under the federal Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program for eligible First Nations and Inuit individuals), and the geographic distance between chiropractic clinics and Indigenous communities.

> *The biggest barrier to chiropractic care has been funding. NIHB doesn't cover chiropractic care, even though it's been the only form of treatment that has consistently worked for me.*
> Indigenous Patient

Reflections from First Nations Health Departments

In speaking with Health Directors in three Nations and one Grand Council (which represents 28 Nations) the key issues discussed related to chiropractic care are:

- Lack of funding for chiropractic services under the federal Non-Insured Health Benefits Program;
    - Members with insurance through their employer will often have coverage but then accessing care can be a challenge often due to distance of services and lack of transportation.
- Lack of facilities to allow chiropractic services to be offered in the Nations' Health Centres; and
- Distance from chiropractic care.

Those engaged from First Nation health care teams recommend the following:

Build relations

- Take time to understand what territory you are on, the Nations on the land and their history in the region.
- Conduct outreach and educate Indigenous communities about the health services chiropractors provide, health benefits and ways of accessing these services.

Collaborate with community health departments

- Reach out to the Health Director and few key members of the health delivery team, including community health and home care.
- Get to know the Nation, community members, their history and what are the health challenges and opportunities faced by the community.
- Take guidance from the Health Centre teams and understand how chiropractic care can integrate into the health practice.

Integrate Indigenous healing practices into the chiropractic curriculum

- Invite knowledge keepers and Elders to support curriculum design and delivery.
- As part of the chiropractic curriculum, require chiropractors to undertake a hands-on practicum in an Indigenous community where they would work alongside the local health care team. This would provide hands on, practical training, as well as understanding Indigenous health systems before they graduate and start to practice.

About Federation of Canadian Chiropractic

The FCC is a national organization composed of provincial and territorial regulators, accreditation and educational institutions, and chiropractic specialty colleges. The FCC works to share resources and advance common initiatives, with a goal to provide a countrywide forum in which accreditation and regulatory resources can be easily accessed and shared. The FCC works with provincial and territorial regulators to ensure chiropractors have the education and support they need to carry out their responsibilities and to serve the public safely.

Accreditation of Education Programs:
A core function is accrediting, recognizing, and certifying chiropractic educational programs in Canada, through the Council on Chiropractic Education Canada (CCEC).

Standards and Guidance:
The Federation establishes collective standards for chiropractic education and entry to practice competencies used by provincial and territorial regulators, as well as provides a forum for coordination and discussion of best practices in development of standards of practice, licensing, and recognition of specialty designations, ensuring consistent quality and integrity in the profession.

Leadership on Regulatory Issues:

It takes a leadership role in bringing issues of regulatory interest to a national forum to foster informed and, where appropriate, coordinated decision-making within Canada.

The Federation of Canadian Chiropractic Commitment to Reconciliation

The FCC has been working to respond to the Calls to Action arising from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDA). In 2015, the TRC issued 94 Calls to Action[5] aimed at redressing the legacy of residential schools and advancing reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. These Calls to Action span various sectors, including child welfare, education, health, justice, language, and culture. TRC Calls to Action 22, 23, and 24 focus on the health disparities, cultural competency in healthcare, and the inclusion of Indigenous healing practices.

- Call to Action 22 emphasizes recognizing and utilizing Indigenous healing practices within mainstream healthcare.
- Call to Action 23 calls for increasing the number of Indigenous professionals in healthcare and ensuring their retention in Indigenous communities.
- Call to Action 24 requires medical and nursing schools to mandate courses on Aboriginal health issues and the legacy of residential schools.

This Reconciliation Pathway was developed to support the FCC and provincial and territorial chiropractor regulators in addressing these Calls to Action.

Distinction based

This Pathway is distinction-based and encourages users to recognize the differential needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. This Pathway, by no means, is representative and cannot be seen to be comprehensive of the thoughts, beliefs, or ideologies of the Indigenous community as a whole. It is critical to remember not to assume pan-Indigeneity. While common threads may exist, not every Indigenous Nation, community and individual is the same, and each community has its own unique teachings, cultural protocols, language, backgrounds, and each should be acknowledged, respected, and listened to with fresh eyes and ears.

[5] https://nctr.ca/about/history-of-the-trc/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-of-canada-calls-to-action/

The FCC Reconciliation Pathway

This Pathway is committed to the concept of "Etuaptmumk" or two-eyed seeing[6] – recognizes the strength of Indigenous ways of knowing and the strength of western ways of knowing and uses both competencies together. In Marshall's words:

> *"Two-Eyed Seeing refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing and to using both of these eyes together."*

Pathway Vision

To ensure the chiropractic profession includes Indigenous representation and professionals have training as part of their formal and continuing education with access to tools/supports to provide culturally safe care for Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Guiding Principles

The following principles were used to guide the development of the FCC Reconciliation Pathway.

- **Indigenous informed:** meaning Indigenous peoples including Indigenous chiropractors were engaged to provide direction and input into the development of the Pathway.
- **Flexible and adaptable:** the Pathway is adaptable to different jurisdictions and the needs of chiropractors who will be at different stages in their own reconciliation journey. It is recognized that chiropractors will need different types of support.
- **Supported:** FCC will look to support chiropractors with tools and wise practices in providing culturally safe care.
- **Transparent:** the FCC will be open and clear about what it is trying to achieve and who it needs to work with to achieve intended results.
- **Results**: The FCC and its partners are committed to the results outlined in this Pathway and measurable by reconciliation partners.

[6] The concept of Two-Eyed Seeing was first coined by Albert and Murdena Marshall who are respected Mi'kmaq Elders.

Objectives/Goals

The FCC acknowledges historical injustices and is committed promoting cultural safety, and to advancing equitable healthcare outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

The FCC and its partners intend to build on positive reconciliation efforts and work already underway in some provinces and territories. The FCC will work with provincial and territorial regulators on reconciliation in keeping with the mandate of the FCC and its members.

Alignment with Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing

Our engagement with Indigenous chiropractors, chiropractors who serve Indigenous patients, as well as Indigenous patients themselves, reveals a strong alignment between Indigenous worldviews on health, health services and chiropractic profession – given the profession's focus on wholistic approaches to healing and preventative care.

Those engaged in the development of the Pathway reinforced that alignment between chiropractic care and Indigenous health systems including the Medicine Wheel. This is underscored by the profession's lack of reliance on prescriptive solutions to health and disease. Indigenous health systems represent a holistic view of health, encompassing the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of a person. It emphasizes balance and interconnectedness. Chiropractic and Indigenous approaches to health and healing emphasize the importance of proactive steps to maintain health and prevent illness, rather than solely focusing on treating symptoms after they arise.

> *I don't believe in taking drugs to address health issues because these have consequences. Chiropractic care aligns with my world views.*
>
> Indigenous Patient

Core Elements of Reconciliation

This Pathway seeks to implement key actions for health profession regulators, including:

- Promoting Indigenous cultural safety in chiropractic regulation, education and training;
- Making available a comprehensive inventory of cultural safety training, tools and resources for our members; and
- Encouraging and promoting Indigenous Peoples in all areas of chiropractic professional regulatory, advisory and leadership positions.

Indigenous Cultural Safety and Competency

It is important for chiropractors to approach Indigenous patients with cultural humility and respect, recognizing that Western healthcare practices may not always align with Indigenous beliefs and values. The FCC will work with provincial and territorial regulators to ensure Indigenous cultural safety is integrated into the education, accreditation and ongoing continuing professional development of chiropractors through the following:

- **Cultural Competency Standards:** Integrate cultural competency standards into professional standards of practice, codes of ethics, and continuing education requirements; thereby contributing to the public interest by regulating culturally safe chiropractic services and practices. This might include training on Indigenous historical contexts including colonization, culture, approaches to health and healing to support the provision of culturally safe and effective care.
- **Curriculum Reform:** Integrate Indigenous health perspectives, traditional healing practices and Indigenous patient perspectives into clinical training; and incorporate social determinants of health into chiropractic curricula. Promote respect for and integration of traditional Indigenous healing methods into chiropractic practice, where appropriate and in consultation with Indigenous healers and communities.
- **Collaboration with Traditional Healers:** Establish mechanisms for collaboration and referral between chiropractors and traditional Indigenous healers, creating integrated care pathways.
- **Mandatory Training:** Implement mandatory Indigenous cultural safety and humility training for all registered chiropractors, board members, staff, and students. The training should be developed and delivered in partnership with Indigenous communities and educators.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly evaluate and monitor cultural safety training programs to ensure effectiveness and relevance, adapting content based on feedback from Indigenous communities.

Develop and Implement a Centre for Wise Practices

Working with provincial and territorial regulators, the FCC will develop a Centre for Wise Practices (Intranet Hub) which will be designed to share wise practices in providing culturally safe chiropractic care and tools to support chiropractor professionals. The Centre is intended to help promote culturally responsive chiropractic services and support chiropractors in tailoring these tools and approaches to the specific needs and preferences of Indigenous communities.

Possible areas of inclusion:

- An evergreen toolkit to help guide chiropractors and office staff in their reconciliation efforts including tips, tools and supports for providing culturally safe practices in an Indigenous and distinction-based context.
- Links to continuing education courses in how to offer culturally safe care and reference material (such as online courses on the history of colonialism in Canada and the impact health care professionals have had on Indigenous trust in the health care system and professionals).
- A chiropractor community of practice that can contribute to an inventory of reconciliation wise practices that can be shared and accessed across the profession.
- An area that tracks complaints that are race related with a focus on Indigenous patients as it relates to commitments by the profession to provide culturally safe care.
- Directions and support for Regulatory organizations in their recruitment of Indigenous public board members.
- Potential for having volunteer reconciliation navigators who are available to mentor chiropractors and staff in the provision of culturally safe chiropractic practices and services.

> *I haven't had specific training, but I have learned to treat with empathy, compassion, understanding. I have learned that asking about their traditional healing helps to inform the care I provide. It is critical to respect local/traditional healing.*
> Chiropractor who Serves Indigenous Patients

The Centre should be dedicated to support cultural change by working in an integrated fashion with each Regulatory organization.

Encourage and Promote Indigenous People in the Profession and Leadership Positions

The FCC will encourage policies and practices in relation to diversity and inclusion including having Indigenous representation on regulatory Boards and committees, in order to ensure their voice in decision-making processes. The FCC will also commit to the following:

- Policy Review: Review all existing policies, procedures, and regulations to identify and address any discriminatory impacts on Indigenous peoples.

- Indigenous Consultation: Establish mechanisms for ongoing consultation and collaboration with Indigenous communities in the development and implementation of professional guidelines and policies.

Support Indigenous Peoples in Becoming Chiropractors

> *People need to trust the profession, to see themselves actually becoming a chiropractor. Communities need to understand the chiropractic services provided and see the value in these services.*
> Indigenous Chiropractor

Systemic barriers to Indigenous representation in health professions continue to exist including limited programs, funding and mentorship opportunities[7].

The FCC will encourage the establishment of scholarships and bursaries and opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be educated and trained in the chiropractic profession in Canada. The goal would be to increase the Indigenous representation in the chiropractic profession as a key strategy for improving culturally safe care.

> *We need more incentives for Indigenous people to attend chiropractic training such as scholarships and more training for those in the fields to assume more leadership positions*
> Indigenous Chiropractor

Communications and Outreach

The FCC will work with its partners to communicate key aspects about the chiropractic profession to Indigenous leadership and communities, including:

- How the practice is regulated;
- Licensure processes to practice; and
- How to make a complaint.

FCC will influence partners within the profession to support ongoing communications and engagement with Indigenous peoples in Canada.

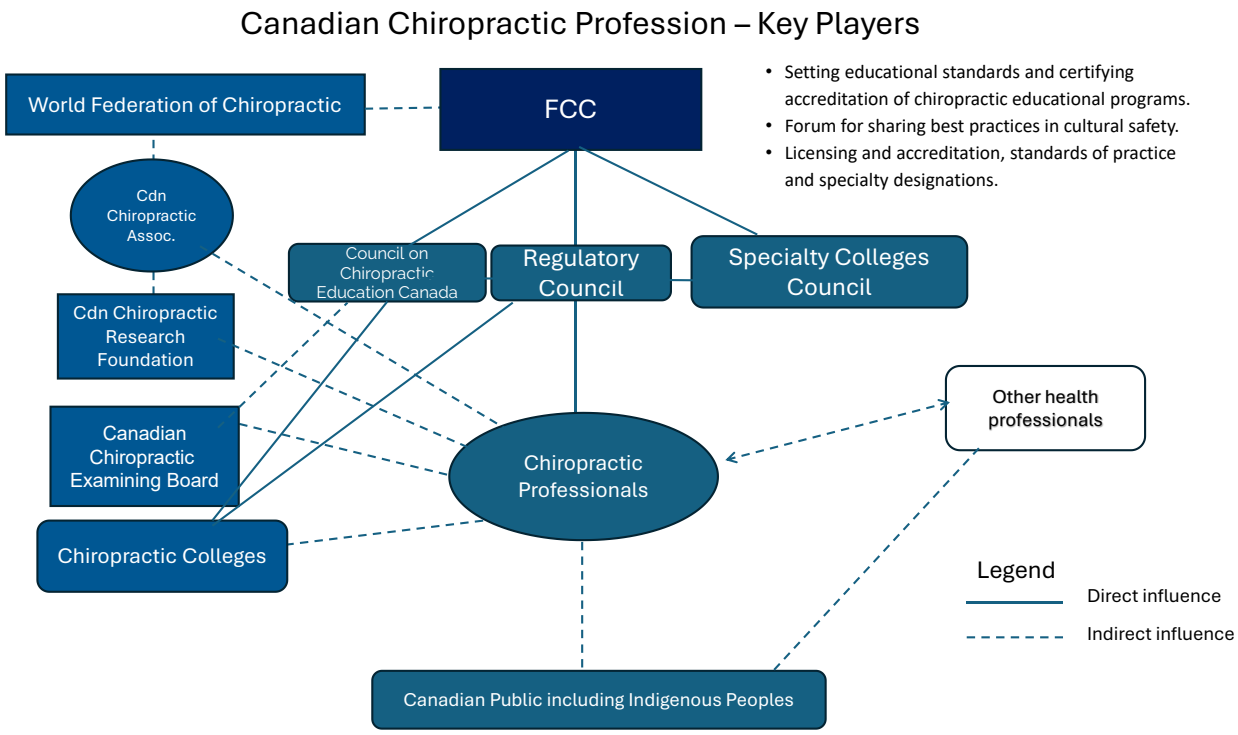
[7] Ross, S. M., Wilson, K., Whitehead, K., et al. (2019). *Developing Indigenous Health Workforce Strategies in Canada*. Journal of Indigenous Health, 15(2), 134–148.

Supporting Partners in Addressing Broader Barriers to Chiropractic Care

Indigenous people in Canada face a complex web of barriers when trying to access healthcare services, including chiropractic care. These barriers include broader systemic barriers linked to geography, limited availability of services in communities; lack of funding/insurance coverage for chiropractic care – to name but a few. The existence of these barriers were reinforced by the representatives engaged to inform the development of this Pathway. While issue of access are outside the mandate of the FCC, its mandate can be extended to promoting safe care and a commitment to working with partners within the profession to increase access to respectful and appropriate health care and chiropractic health care services for Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Accountability and Transparency

The FCC will focus on the following key commitments to ensure it is accountable for results from the implementation of the FCC Reconciliation Pathway.

- **Regular Reporting:** Publicly report on the progress of the Reconciliation Pathway, including metrics related to Indigenous representation, cultural safety training, accessibility, and health outcomes. Measures identified by chiropractors include:
    - Establish baseline measurements and track progress on chiropractic cultural competency and safety training outcomes.
    - Assess utilization rates of chiropractic care among Indigenous populations on a province-by-province basis to measure increased access and identify barriers.
- **Oversight:** Establish an independent oversight committee, including Indigenous representatives, to monitor the implementation of the reconciliation plan and provide feedback and recommendations.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Commit to continuous improvement based on feedback from Indigenous communities, evaluation results, and emerging best practices.

Mapping of the Key Players Influencing the Canadian Chiropractic Profession